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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISARMAMENT MATTERS

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. The Secretary-General reports annually to the General Assembly on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 38/183 O of 20 December 1983.

2. The Board held two sessions in 1995, the first at Geneva from 10 to 12 January and the second in New York from 19 to 23 June. The meetings were chaired by Ambassador Mohammed Shaker.

3. On both occasions I was able to spend some time with the Board, giving them my views on issues and hearing their advice on the role of the Secretary-General, and the Secretariat, in the field of disarmament and related matters. The Board is working more and more in the broader context of international peace and security in which disarmament is seen as one component of security and not as an end in itself. Nevertheless, the work remains focused on disarmament matters.

4. Just before the meeting in June, I attended a meeting of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations. I was thus able to confirm directly with the members that the resources of the United Nations available to meet the costs of some of their suggestions were extremely limited or non-existent. The Board had identified substantial resource requirements in the areas of servicing the Conference on Disarmament;

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* A/50/150.

enabling the regional centres to function; promulgating to Member States the merits of the Register of Conventional Arms; and maintaining the ability of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) to produce quality research. Unfortunately, given the present financial situation of the Organization, I was not able to be optimistic. I therefore call upon Member States to be generous with voluntary contributions in order that improvements can be made in all these important areas. Meanwhile, the Secretariat will be strict in selecting and prioritizing activities in the area of arms control and disarmament, as in all other areas.

Nuclear issues and other weapons of mass destruction

5. The issue of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was addressed by the Board at both meetings. At the time of the Geneva meeting, preparations were under way for the Review and Extension Conference. My position was already known and therefore the Board conveyed to me their views on how I might assist the review and extension process. They also presented their views on how a strengthened and yearly review process might enhance the possibility of an indefinite extension. Professor John Simpson provided a great deal of relevant analysis on this issue at both meetings.

6. By the time of the New York meeting, the Review and Extension Conference had taken place. One of the decisions of the Conference, "Strengthening the review process", sets out a robust procedure and I look forward to its full and timely implementation. In addition to the review process, the Conference, by a second decision, adopted a set of "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament". Central to these principles and objectives is the achievement of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty no later than 1996, immediate commencement of negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive purposes and systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating them.

7. I am convinced that achievement of a test-ban treaty by the end of 1996 is essential both to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to disarmament. In my address to the Conference on Disarmament on 6 July, I stated that practical steps towards nuclear disarmament must now be pursued with determination and that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty was of immediate relevance. This view was also strongly held by the Board. The Board was also of the view, however, that the early indicators of progress in the negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and on the "cut-off" of fissile materials, were less encouraging than anticipated. One of the impediments to progress was the decision by some nuclear-weapon States to continue or resume testing pending the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. The Board recommended that I do all I could to call for a moratorium on testing. In my address to the Conference I strongly urged the nuclear-weapon States to exercise the utmost restraint.

8. I believe that the decisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference are a "package" which has great potential as a framework for nuclear disarmament. However, the process for implementing the package is

not clear, nor is the role of the United Nations in that process. I have asked the Board to give thought to this matter and to report its views to me at the next meeting.

9. Others in the international community have been thinking about the role of the United Nations with respect to all weapons of mass destruction, in particular the role of the Security Council. Although the Council, in its statement of 31 January 1992, clearly defined a role for itself with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it did not decide on a monitoring mechanism of its own. There have recently been various proposals by Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to give the Security Council the "ways and means" to assess the risk of proliferation. The Board, on the whole, saw certain merits in some of the ideas put forward, but felt that the matter required more thorough consideration. I look forward to its further reflections on this issue but I acknowledge, of course, that any decision in this regard will have to come from the Security Council itself. I will be following with interest the Council's own discussions on this issue.

10. During the Geneva meeting, members of the Board expressed concern at the slow pace by which signatories were ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention. At their suggestion, on 13 January, I wrote to the Foreign Ministers of all States signatory to the Convention, urging ratification at the earliest possible time. I was encouraged by the replies received. I look forward to attainment of the goal of 65 signatures so that the process can begin of bringing the Convention into force.

11. Members of the Board agreed with me that the problem of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive substances was a serious one deserving the attention of the disarmament community. The Board felt that some good research had been done in this area, and that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was implementing an excellent action plan, but it felt that there was still room for more work. Accordingly, in its capacity as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, the Board recommended that UNIDIR explore the possibility of carrying out a study on the subject in cooperation with IAEA. I look forward to the results.

Micro-disarmament

12. The Board also devoted a great deal of its time to the concept of "micro-disarmament", which had been raised in my position paper "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" (A/50/60-S/1995/1 dated 25 January 1995). The proliferation of light weapons in particular was a major concern of the Board. Members recognized the advances already made by the United Nations in the context of comprehensive peace settlements and the special efforts now under way with respect to land-mines. Nevertheless, the Board identified the need for a better understanding of the ways and means of conducting micro-disarmament in other situations where there was no formal peace settlement and perhaps no presence of the United Nations or a regional organization. Micro-disarmament would seem to be an area where regional organizations have an essential role to play and must become fully engaged. Internal stability is also necessary to foster a climate for micro-disarmament.

13. The Board strongly encouraged the efforts of my advisory mission to Mali in 1994 and its follow-up activity this year in six other States of the Sahara-Sahel subregion, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. However, the groundwork done by those missions only heightens awareness of the need for practical answers to some challenging questions, e.g., What type of incentive programmes would work in Africa? What level of stability is required before they could be implemented? What sort of "Code of conduct" might be effective with supplier States?

14. The experience of the Sahara-Sahel mission, which largely mirrored the Mali mission of last year, indicated that unless there was an adequate level of personal security for the people of a country plagued with a proliferation of light weapons, there would be no possibility of achieving successful micro-disarmament programmes. The Board took firmly the view, which I fully share, that developing countries, especially those emerging from situations of internal conflict, require external assistance to achieve stability. Without stability, hope for sustainable development is lost. The delicate question of how to recognize this need in the allocation of external assistance was of concern to the Board and is, I am sure, a concern to many States, in particular the major donors. The Board was able to draw on the experience of one of its Members, Brigadier General (Ret.) van der Graaf, deputy leader of the missions to Mali and the Sahara-Sahel, in understanding more fully a situation that is unfortunately all too common today. The Board fully supports the concept of a proportional and integrated approach to security and development. This approach is one I intend to promote with other parts of the United Nations system, especially the United Nations Development Programme, and with the donor countries.

New special session of the General Assembly on disarmament

15. Another major issue for the Board was the new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which has been agreed in principle by the General Assembly and is planned for 1997. As forecast in my last report to the General Assembly, at the January meeting the Board formed a small working group to develop a paper with its recommendations on a "vision" for that session, and the Secretary-General's possible role before, during and after it. The draft paper, entitled "Some thoughts on the disarmament agenda at the end of the century: the role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations", was coordinated by Ambassador Pfirter with substantive assistance from Ambassadors Agaev and de La Gorce who provided supporting papers of their own.

16. In its preliminary discussion of these papers, the Board agreed that it was time to consider a disarmament agenda which might have the following components and characteristics. It would need to situate arms control and disarmament within an overall international system of security. That system of security would have to include provisions for eventually replacing the current nuclear arrangements. The agenda would need to be balanced between nuclear and conventional issues. International terrorism, possibly involving weapons of mass destruction, would need to be part of it. Regional approaches would be needed but work done in the global setting must be drawn on as appropriate.

Finally, the institutional arrangements for arms control and disarmament would need to be reviewed.

17. With respect to the new special session the Board noted that its timing, following so soon after the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, might not be conducive to achieving the expected objectives. Some positive results in implementing the decisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference will need to be forthcoming before a concerted attempt is made to develop a new agenda. In that light, the Board noted that 1997 is also the first year of the new Non-Proliferation Treaty review process. It is also the point at which the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty negotiations should have been completed and substantive progress made on the "cut-off" for the production of fissile materials for nuclear explosive purposes. In those circumstances it might be better to schedule the special session at a more propitious time, but in any case not before 1998.

18. Some members of the Board also made the point that instead of a special session devoted to disarmament, Member States might consider having a special session on Global Security and Disarmament. This would go further than just thinking of disarmament as a component of security. It would also allow a deliberate and considered debate on some of the issues I raised in "An Agenda for Peace" (A/C.1/47/7) and its Supplement.

19. The Board will continue to develop the paper on the special session for consideration at its next meeting in early 1996. I have not yet taken a position on the scope or timing of the special session but I thought it useful to apprise Member States of the thinking of the Board which has raised very pertinent questions.

Register of Conventional Arms

20. The members reviewed the quantity and quality of reports to the Register of Conventional Arms. They regretted that the Register was not attracting more universal participation. The Board accordingly recommended that States that are currently participating in the Register should encourage other States, through a kind of "partnership approach", to do so also, and should offer to assist those States in the political and technical aspects of reporting. At the same time, the Board reiterated its support for the concept of regional and subregional variants of the Register and commended the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, and its regional centres, for including this option in its programme to promulgate the merits of transparency through the Register. The Board hoped that the Centre had sufficient financial resources to carry out this programme. I welcome all efforts to enhance the Register process and in particular commend the "partnership approach" recommended by the Board.

The Conference on Disarmament

21. During the Geneva meeting, the Board received briefings on a number of ongoing activities. The President of the Conference on Disarmament for January addressed the Board on its methods of work and the activities of its various

subgroups. The Board was disappointed to learn that many problems remain, related to the methods of work and dating from the cold war era. The unresolved question of membership was also troubling and detracted from the work of the Conference. Nevertheless, the Conference was agreed to have done, and was capable of doing, very good work as the only negotiating body for multilateral arms control and disarmament. I hope that the membership problem will be resolved soon and that important issues like the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and "cut-off", noted above, will be concluded successfully without delay. I made all these points in my address to the Conference on 6 July 1995 when it closed its second session.

22. The Special Coordinator of the Conference on Disarmament, charged with developing a mandate for an ad hoc committee on the cessation of production of fissile material for nuclear explosive purposes, also briefed the Board on his efforts. During the Geneva meeting, the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts, preparing for the Review Conference on the Inhumane Weapons Convention, spoke on the state of its work at that time. These briefings were very beneficial to the Board and put them in a much better position to advise me on key matters within their jurisdiction.

Other matters

23. At the Geneva meeting, the Board, reflecting on its earlier discussion on "Equitable and responsible access to new technologies", noted that this issue (as subsequently manifested in the debate at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference) was far from being settled to the satisfaction of all States. The Board once again supported the efforts that had been made in the United Nations Disarmament Commission over the last few years, and recommended that consideration be given to possible efforts at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to return the item to the agenda of the Commission in 1996. Meanwhile, the Board also recommended that the guidelines, as currently developed in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, be examined in detail at the regional level. I hope that Member States will give due consideration to this point.

24. The Board was briefed on the activities of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs. Members were particularly interested in the Centre's periodic and special publications in the area of arms control and disarmament. Members of the Board have been active in contributing articles and essays to these publications, which is an important part of their contribution to inter-sessional work. Briefings also included a report by Ambassador Mason who chaired the study group of governmental experts on "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations". I look forward to the results of that study, which was completed in July 1995.

25. The briefings also included updates on the three regional centres for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Details of the parlous financial situation of those Centres were given in my separate report on them (document A/50/380). The Board was concerned that the many proposals to devolve responsibility for security-related matters to regions and subregions were not being reflected in the

attitude of the General Assembly and Member States towards the regional centres. Voluntary contributions for substantive activities continued to fall and Member States remained reluctant to finance their operational costs. This was prejudicing the centres' potential to become focal points for the devolution of responsibility and development of initiatives for their regions. Should there be no change in Member States' attitude to financial support for the centres, I see no alternative to closing their offices.

26. The Board was interested in the role of regional organizations in collective security. It requested and received a briefing from the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on the current relationship between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations in the field of peace and security. This in turn led to a discussion on the various forms of preventive action that could be implemented by global and regional organizations and how they might complement each other. Discussion on this item was greatly assisted by a presentation by Professor Gasteyger.

27. During its session in July 1994, the Board had decided to revert to a previous practice of inviting the NGO community to meet with it and to present their views on items of topical interest. NGOs play a significant role in arms control and their activity should be encouraged. The January meeting with the Special NGO Committee for Disarmament (based at Geneva) revealed a major concern in the international NGO community that the United Nations should better communicate its position on matters of international concern, particularly in the field of arms control and disarmament. This is an issue on which I have expressed my own apprehensions, including in my report of last year. The Special NGO Committee was also concerned with the lack of resources devoted to disarmament and, in supporting the idea of another special session on disarmament, hoped that one of the results might be the establishment of a disarmament fund. In particular, the Committee asked that more resources be allocated to the regional centres whose slow development they regretted. The Special NGO Committee stressed that it had just begun to study the "Supplement" but, on the whole, was sympathetic to the focus put on the proliferation of light weapons.

28. When the Board met in New York in June with the equivalent organization there, the Special NGO Committee on Disarmament at Headquarters, the atmosphere was much coloured by the recent Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference. The Committee briefed the Board on its perception of the Conference results stressing, inter alia, the large degree of support expressed for the elimination of nuclear weapons as soon as possible. NGOs felt that progress in the Conference on Disarmament on issues directly related to the Non-Proliferation Treaty was much too slow and stressed that this would again put in question the sincerity of States' declared intentions to make real progress in nuclear disarmament. The Committee was also concerned with conventional arms issues and welcomed, in particular, the work being done on the problem of land-mines. The New York Committee also raised the question of communications in the context of "on-line" access via the Internet to United Nations documentation, reports, etc., and better access to documentation and delegations during major conferences. Arrangements are in hand for improvements in both these areas.

29. I welcome the reopening of communication between the Board and the NGO community and look forward to its continuance.

30. Also at Geneva, and under the sponsorship of UNIDIR, the Board was afforded a briefing on the work of the Commission on Global Governance. Lord Judd and Mrs. Sadako Ogata, two of the members, gave an overview of their report "Our global neighbourhood", and engaged in a dialogue with Board members on its main conclusions. Although the Board did not have a unanimous view on all facets of that report, there was agreement with many of its conclusions, particularly that the security of States is only relevant if it enhances the security of peoples. Board members were particularly interested in the major recommendations concerning nuclear weapons. This type of briefing, as I mentioned last year, will be a regular feature of Board sessions.

31. Future sessions of the Board will focus on: the role of the United Nations in helping to implement the decisions taken at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, with special priority for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the "cut-off" negotiations; development of practical options for micro-disarmament, especially at the regional level; and development of ideas for the disarmament agenda for the year 2000 and beyond, with particular reference to the proposed special session on disarmament (or global security and disarmament).

32. A number of Board members completed their term of office in 1994. I have thanked them for their services while at the same time welcoming the new members, Mr. Nana Sutresna, Mr. Natarajan Krishnan, Mr. André Erdös and Mr. Oumirseric Kastenov. A list of the current members is in the annex to the present report.

33. In its capacity as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, the Board devoted one meeting at each session to reviewing the report of the Director for the previous year and to approving the programme of work for 1996.

ANNEX

Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

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Notes

a/ Ex officio member.